

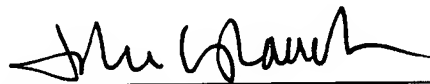
REMARKS

Claims 3, 5 and 7-15 have been amended and new claims 16-20 have been added. These amendments have been made to conform the claims of the international application to U.S. patent practice. Accordingly, upon entry of this preliminary amendment, claims 1-20 are pending in the application.

This U.S. national patent application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and 365 of international patent application number PCT/DE02/04522, filed on December 10, 2002, which was published as international publication number WO03/061014 A1, in German, and claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 to the filing date of January 15, 2002 of German patent application number 10201304.7, filed on January 15, 2002. The specification has been amended to include at the first sentence the claim to priority required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.78.

With this preliminary amendment, the application is believed to be in condition for early action on the merits. Should the examiner deem a telephone conference to be of assistance in advancing the application to allowance, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



John G. Rauch
Registration No. 37,218
Attorney for Applicant

July 13, 2004
BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200